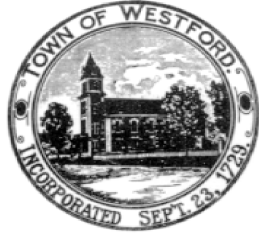


Community Preservation Committee  
55 Main Street  
Westford, Massachusetts 01886  
Contact: Jesse Beyer  
TEL (978) 399-2905 FAX (978) 399-2556  
jbeyer@westfordma.gov



## **Westford Community Preservation Funding Application**

### **Fiscal Year 2023 Project Submission Form**

#### **Basic Project Information:**

Submission Date: January 13, 2023

Project Name: Antique Snow Roller Restoration

CPA funds requested: \$ 3,000.00

#### **Applicant:**

Name: Westford Historical Society and Museum

Address: PO Box 411

Phone: 978-692-5550

Email: president@museum.westford.org

Sponsoring board/committee(s): Westford Historical Commission

Additional responsible parties – i.e. Property owner, consultant (if applicable)

Project manager/contact person: Leslie Howard, President

**Purpose:** (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Open Space
- ☐ Affordable Housing
- X Historic Preservation
- ☐ Recreation

**Project location/address:**

Assessor information: (map/block/lot id) as applicable:  
055 0013 0000 (2-4 Boston Road)

Ownership/care and custody information:

Westford Historical Society and Museum

Director, Linda Greene [director@museum.westford.org](mailto:director@museum.westford.org) 978-692-5550

President, Leslie Howard [president@museum.westford.org](mailto:president@museum.westford.org) 978-692-5550

Deed restrictions required:

- ☐ Conservation
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Historic Preservation

**Budget:**

Complete budget (attach as necessary)

\$2,250.00 for the structure

\$2,000.00 for the snowroller restoration

Total: \$4,250.00

Percent of total budget requested from Community Preservation funds:

\$3,000.00 is roughly 75% of the total cost of the project.

Other funding sources (committed/applied/planned):

Museum fundraiser, private foundations

Anticipated annual income/expenses: \$0

Recurring expenses (i.e. Maintenance): \$0

We do not anticipate recurring expenses for this project, unless a weather event should damage the protective structure.

Taxpayer impact:

This project is not anticipated to have an impact on Westford taxpayers.

**Procurement: Projects over \$10,000**

Please explain how you intend to comply with all applicable public procurement laws for the purchase of supplies/services related to this project funding request.

**Timeline:**

Proposed Start Date: Spring/Summer 2023

Proposed Completion Date: Fall 2023

**Endorsement by applicable boards/commissions/community groups:**

- ☐ Affordable Housing Committee and/or Housing Authority
- ☐ Cemetery Commission
- ☐ Conservation Commission
- X Historic Commission
- ☐ Parks and Recreation Commission
- ☐ Planning Board
- ☐ Water Commission
- X Other: Westford Historical Society and Museum

**Project Description and Goals:**

**Please describe project.** In proposal, please include how this project impacts Westford's citizens and addresses Westford's current and/or future needs? How does this project preserve Westford's character and meet its preservation goals? Why should this project be funded this year? (Use as many additional pages as necessary)

The snow roller is an interesting piece of transportation history. They are built with an iron core and wood panels around the wheel. Attached is a seat for the driver. Typically, oxen pulled the rollers, but horses were also used. The roller would pack down the snow on the roads so that horses and sleighs could travel on them. This contrasts with a snow plow that cleared the roads of all snow, which would be easier for automobiles. As there weren't many automobiles in Westford in the early 20th century, the snow roller was a better option.

The town of Westford used snow rollers for several years. The first one was purchased by the town in 1906 and built in the wheelwright shop of J. A. Walkden of Chamberlain's Corner. The town later found them to be inefficient. It is unclear exactly when the town

stopped using snow rollers. Our snow roller was owned and used by a man named David Scott. Mr. Scott was born in 1897 in Carnoustie, Scotland. After immigrating to the country, Mr. Scott worked as a chauffeur for the Abiel J. Abbot family who owned the Abbot Worsted Mill in Westford. David married Agnes Kjelvik, an immigrant from Norway, on April 12, 1919. She worked as a ladies maid for Mrs. Abbot. When they were first married, the young couple rented an apartment on Main Street in Westford. They purchased the Oren Coolidge House, at 17 Forge Village Road, in 1923.

The town's rollers were much larger than the one owned by Mr. Scott. The rollers generally varied in size from 2 to 6 feet in diameter and from 4 to 12 feet in length. The larger the roller's diameter, the greater the depth of snow it could handle. A roller could compact a snow accumulation roughly equal to half its diameter. The number of pairs of horses used depended on the terrain and depth of snow. For the larger rollers, two men would sit for safety and for a "change off." Mr. Scott's roller was not large enough for two men to sit. Mr. Scott's roller is approximately 7 feet long and 3.5 feet in diameter (91 inches x 41 inches) and is considered a small roller. To us, this indicates that he probably built this or had it built for his personal use. His prior jobs as a chauffeur, farmer, and carpenter lend itself well to this indication. In Vermont, the towns would supply the roller and the men in different sections of town were supposed to use their own horses and keep their section of road clear.

It seems Mr. Scott also felt that he had a responsibility to keep his road clear for the residents. It was during the early 1920s that David Scott used his snowroller. Friends in town remember him rolling the snow on Forge Village Road all the way to the train station in Forge Village, a distance of about two miles. He did this so neighbors could travel safely to greet their relatives arriving by train, and also to clear the roads for the Abbots and other mill employees to get to work safely.

When the roller was no longer used, the Scotts stored it in the basement of their barn. Here it stayed for many years. Mrs. Agnes Scott always intended to donate the roller to the Westford Historical Society. When the Eckbergs purchased the property on Forge Village Road in the early 1990s, it became their intention to honor Mrs. Scott's wish that the roller belong to the Historical Society.

In May of 2022, the Historical Society connected with some motivated and enthusiastic people, Jim and Nancy Beckwith of Phaze II Autobody and Mike Heffernan of Heffernan Build. They were able to extract the snowroller and some of its accessories from the basement of the barn and transport it to the Historical Society grounds.

Having rested for the last 90 years or so on the dirt floor of a barn, the roller is in need of significant repairs. Restoration will include rotating the rotting pieces and replacing some with new wood, restoring the paint/enamel on the cast iron core, recreating the harness, and recreating the frame with a seat on top. We'd like to build a three-sided shelter for the roller with an opening facing Boston Road. The plan for the structure is for a 10' wide, 8' deep shelter with a sloped roof using conventional 2x4s and plywood products. The floor would be 12" x 12" concrete tiles. The tiles are extended outward by 3 feet to provide a viewing surface. The foundation would be compacted crushed stone. The siding will use cedar shingles from the museum's inventory leftover from the roofing project. Asphalt shingles will be used for the structure's roof for practical advantages.

The size of the structure is less than 120 square feet and does not require an accessory structure permit from the town.

The structure will protect the roller and create an outdoor exhibit. We have a group of dedicated volunteers who will help with the restoration. You can read more about the Scott family and the restoration on our website:

<https://museum.westford.org/help-restore-the-westford-museum-antique-snow-roller-fundraiser/>

Restoring the snow roller impacts the residents of Westford by providing an incredible glimpse into the town's past and how it handled snow management before snow plows. This project preserves and enhances a historic resource that makes Westford unique, one of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan goals. This piece of the town's history is essential as one of the last remaining examples of a snow roller in the entire state of Massachusetts. It's a gem and true historical asset to the community. This project, including the outdoor exhibit, further meets Westford's preservation goals by showcasing the historic nature of the town center, through which the snow roller was used. The Historical Society is honored to have this piece in our collection as a way to share the Scott's story, as well as the story of snow management and transportation in Westford.

This project should be funded this year so that the necessary work can be accomplished and the roller does not further deteriorate. 2023 is also a centennial celebration of the roller. Mr. Scott used it in the early 1920s and it is a wonderful anniversary in which to celebrate it and the Scott's contribution to town.

If this application is submitted outside of the usual funding cycle, please explain why.

This application was submitted within the usual funding cycle.

**List of Attachments:** (including but not limited to photos, plans, maps, quotes, costs, estimates, letters of endorsement)

Please see 2 photos below and a letter of endorsement from Dave Gutbrod of the Westford Historic Commission.

**Applicant Signatures/Date:**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debbie Howard".

January 13, 2023

For Community Preservation Committee Use Only

Date received:

Copies distributed on:

Is sufficient data/detail provided?

Is timeliness an issue?

Is additional information required?

Project interview date:

Public hearing date:

Committee vote:

Yes

No

Abstain

Date

Recommendation from Committee:

Recommended for Town Meeting consideration:

Spring

Fall

Special

Year

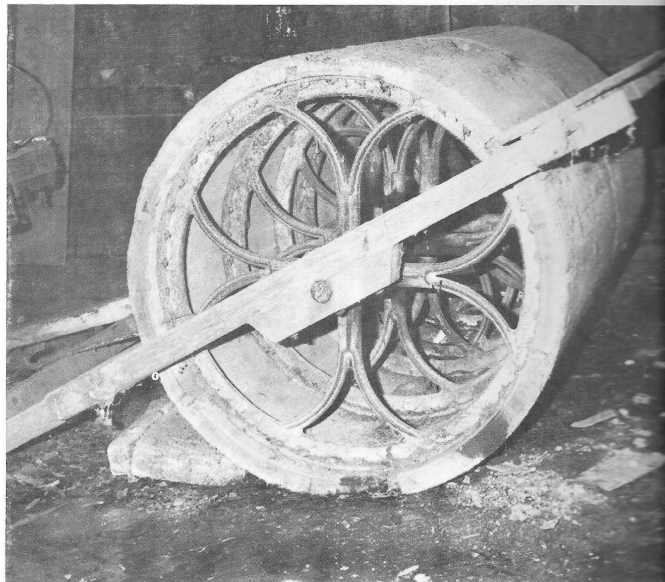


This is a picture of the snow roller on the flatbed truck in May 2022 after being taken out of the Scott/Eckberg barn.

*Snow Roller.* "My mother would dress me up to see the wooden roller which was as wide as our road and pulled by four to six horses," states Bob Spinner. "It packed the snow for sleighs."

Tom Curley recalled, "The snow roller packed the snow down hard. As long as it was cold, it was okay. With a warm spell, a horse would break through the crust to his knees. They only used the roller a few years because of this."

Indeed, at the March 1908 town meeting it was voted to appropriate \$250 for the purchase of two snow rollers; at the 1909 town meeting the article was dismissed that would have purchased another one. No doubt the town returned to a working sled with attached plow for the breaking out of roads.



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This is an excerpt from June Kennedy's book, *Westford Recollections 1729-1979*. Pictured is the Scott snow roller, presumably in the barn, with some anecdotes from townspeople about snow rollers.

To the Community Preservation Committee,

It has come to the attention of the Historic Commission that we have an opportunity to preserve and share the history of a unique example of a "Snow roller" which was beautifully described in both history and provenience within the application for funds to assist in this project.

The Historic Commission is in full support of this chance to support a piece of Westford history.

Its connection with the Abbot Mill it would seem would encourage stakeholders in the mill community to make up the difference and the continued maintenance over the years. Perhaps even be pulled out and used in future winters around the Abbot Mill grounds to remind us of our pre-automobile history!

Please support this application,

David Gutbrod  
Westford Historic Commission  
617- 851-8228